

Water slides for children have dangers associated with their improper use and, when children are playing on them, they need to be supervised constantly. It's also a good idea to insist upon a rest period for children of approximately 10 minutes per hour.

The pool supervisor should keep a constant check on all activities and watch out for the condition of the water, for broken bottles, spilt oil and blood, and see that the diving board is working properly.

At all times, life-saving equipment, a ring buoy, a throwing line and a rescue pole, as well as a first-aid kit, should be readily available.

Establish pool rules and regulations

All home pools should have well-established pool rules and regulations, policies and procedures under which they are operated. All children and adults using the pool should be familiar with these rules.

Procedures should also be established for an emergency so it can be handled promptly and efficiently, regardless of its degree of seriousness.

If there's a pool injury

Head, spinal or neck injuries may result from diving into shallow water. If someone should suffer a head or spinal injury while diving, the victim should be kept still at water-surface level until skilled assistance arrives.

Under no circumstances should the victim be removed from the water unless a flat board is used, to extend at least from below the hips to above the head. Only then can the victim be removed from the water without moving the neck or spine.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

(Fill in and keep handy near your telephone at all times when your pool is in use)

Ambulance _____

Family doctor _____

Fire department _____

Police department _____

Spills of hazardous chemicals _____
(your local health department, medical officer of health and the manufacturer of the product used to disinfect your pool should be able to advise on chemical spills)

Hospital _____

In an extreme emergency, dial 0 and ask the operator to connect you with the number or service you require.

Note: For further information about the product you use to disinfect your pool, contact the manufacturer.



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Safety around the swimming pool

The backyard pool — today's version of the old swimming hole

A generation ago, few summer pleasures promised quite so much fun as splashing around in the old swimming hole. Fast replacing it in today's society is the much more sophisticated swimming pool which, in increasing numbers, is appearing in Ontario backyards.

In fact, Ontario now has more private or residential pools than public pools, of which there are several thousand. Public pools include community pools, pools in recreation centres, in multi-family dwellings, in apartment buildings and in hotels and motels.

Backyard pools are being installed in growing numbers and it may seem blissful on a lazy summer day to relax in the privacy of your own pool, but several problems cloud the horizon.

There is an increasing number of pool accidents, which can involve the loss of life, property damage or both. Many of these accidents could be avoided, if owners would properly maintain and supervise their pools, and take proper swimming-pool safety precautions.

An estimated 55 or so fires and explosions occur annually in and around home pools in this province alone, and they have become a matter of serious concern to fire departments. But they can largely be avoided altogether with knowledge, common sense and care for the lives and safety of others.

Safety depends on pool owner's standards

To operate a swimming pool in Ontario legally, the pool owner must satisfy municipal fencing bylaws. In the municipality of Scarborough, for example, the bylaws dictate that the "owner of a privately-owned outdoor swimming pool shall erect and maintain an adequate enclosure surrounding the entire swimming pool area . . . to a height . . . of not less than four feet."

Initially, the onus for complying with the Electrical Safety Code rests with the firm or contractor installing the pool; after installation, responsibility for safety rests with the owner.

By contrast, public pool operators are required to follow maintenance and safety standards set by local health departments and medical officers of health. Public pools are also subject to periodic inspection by local health inspectors; private pools are not.

Hazards to avoid

The major hazard

By far the greatest threat posed by the backyard swimming pool arises from the improper handling and storage of chemical compounds used as pool sterilizers and disinfectants. Chlorine compounds are commonly used for killing the bacteria in swimming pools. They help to keep pools clean and free from algae — safe to swim in from the standpoint of human health.

Calcium hypochlorite — handle with care

Of all the chemical compounds used to disinfect pools, the dry chlorine compounds demand the greatest care and respect in handling. Calcium hypochlorite, $\text{Ca}(\text{OCl})_2$, in particular, can be pinpointed as being the most effective and the most widely used of these compounds. Ironically, it also happens to be the most hazardous — although other dry chlorine compounds are also hazardous.

Few people would recognize calcium hypochlorite by its generic name because it's sold commercially in a number of retail outlets under several different brand names. In common terms, it's most often referred to simply as "chlorine" or "dry chlorine."

Calcium hypochlorite is a dry white compound available in granular or tablet form, and the safest way of storing it is in closed fibre or plastic containers.

However, it can cause a fire or explosion when it comes into contact with any of the following: cigarettes, oil or grease, beverages, paint thinners, solvents, rags, paper, cosmetics, suntan lotions and creams, blood, fertilizers, dead vegetation and other organic material.

To emphasize just how hazardous calcium hypochlorite can be, a small amount of a soft drink or of any kind of alcoholic beverage added to it can cause an explosion that may result in property damage and personal injury.

Rules for handling calcium hypochlorite and other stabilized chlorine compounds

To help reduce the dangers involved with handling calcium hypochlorite, pool owners should *always* take these precautions:

- read the container label carefully prior to using the product; carefully follow instructions while using it
- mix only with water, adding the chemical to water
- these products are powerful oxidizing substances, so keep them away from combustible materials and do not contaminate them with any foreign matter, because a fire of great intensity may result

- always use a clean, separate container for storing stabilized chlorine products, and not one that previously had calcium hypochlorite in it
- use only a clean, dry cup to measure calcium hypochlorite; any foreign matter in the cup may cause a fire
- always use a clean, dry container to carry the product to the pool and always wear gloves while handling it
- do not mix with household products, acids, solvents or other pool chemicals
- store in a cool, dry place in the original container and always replace the cover
- do not drop, roll or skid the container; always keep it upright
- these products are poisonous, so keep them out of reach of children. They are harmful if swallowed and may cause chemical burns if they come into contact with any part of the body or clothing. **Antidote:** external — flood with water for 15 minutes; internal — drink large quantities of water or milk, followed with vegetable oils or beaten eggs. Call a doctor immediately.

If a fire or explosion should occur

Vacate the swimming pool area and call the local fire department. Drench the fire and surrounding area with water.

Extinguishers of the vaporizing-liquid type such as carbon tetrachloride *must not* be used on fires involving calcium hypochlorite because they will cause an even more serious fire.

Other safety precautions every pool owner should take

Owners should encourage pool users to learn the technique of rescue breathing. Both the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance societies provide free instruction in this technique, which takes a minimum of training to apply.

Horseplay, drinking and running around the pool are other common causes of swimming pool accidents, and owners should ensure that such activities are controlled.

A responsible person should be appointed to assume the unofficial role of lifeguard and pool supervisor, especially when children or non-swimmers are using the pool. Similarly, keeping the pool clean should be the duty of a responsible person fully versed in the proper methods.

As a basic life-saving precaution, a long pole should be kept near the pool as a reaching aid for a person in difficulty in the water. A pole of this kind could even assist a non-swimmer in getting to the side of the pool. It would be helpful to paint the pole a bright color so it's easily recognizable.